



WEB 2.0 RANKER

All Tests and Test Results  
from The SEO Mad Scientist Lab

# Q3 SEO Test Report



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**PREPARED BY**  
SEO Mad Scientist

# SEO Mad Scientist Q3 2022 Report

## July 1st to September 30th, 2022

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There are so many aspects of GMB optimization you can test...

This quarter we tested what factors impacted local rankings and how to trigger instant verifications.

We sorted tests by subject and included links to corresponding updates. Many tests continue to be monitored after reporting, so check out more recent weekend updates!

- How Do Listing Categories Impact Local Rankings?
- How Should You Optimize H1 Headings?
- How to Trigger Instant GBP Verification?
- How Long Does GBP Indexation Take?
- What Happens to Rankings When Market a Listing as Temporarily Closed then Reopen It?



## How Do Listing Categories Impact Local Rankings?

Update: [July 22nd, 2022](#)


**\*\* Test Setup can be found on page 3 of our Q1 2022 SEO Testing Report.**

First, we wanted to do a quick follow-up on our previous “poster” ranking test for a listing that listed “posters” as a service, and we added a review for someone competing about their poster purchase.

The only references we have to “poster” was in the services and the review. The impacts are clear to see...

## Poster References on Listing:

Print shop	
Primary category	
Calendars	>
Digital printing	>
Flyers & brochures	>
Letterhead & business cards	>
Posters	>



★★★★★

27 weeks ago

Needed some custom posters printed for gifts and they did a great job. Best poster printing service in McSherrystown.

S

Simple Merchandising Co. (owner)

23 weeks ago

Thanks. Contact us on our site for anything else you need. [https://simple-merchandising-co.business.site/?utm\\_source=gmb&utm\\_medium=referral](https://simple-merchandising-co.business.site/?utm_source=gmb&utm_medium=referral)

Edit

Delete

## New/Current Rankings for “Posters”:

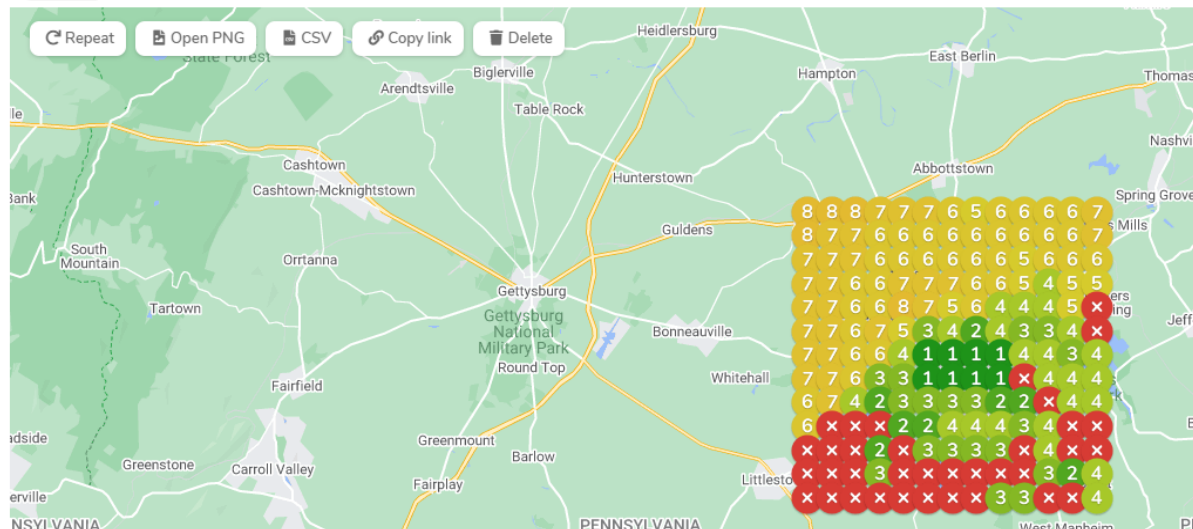
Ranked business:  
Simple Merchandising Co. 

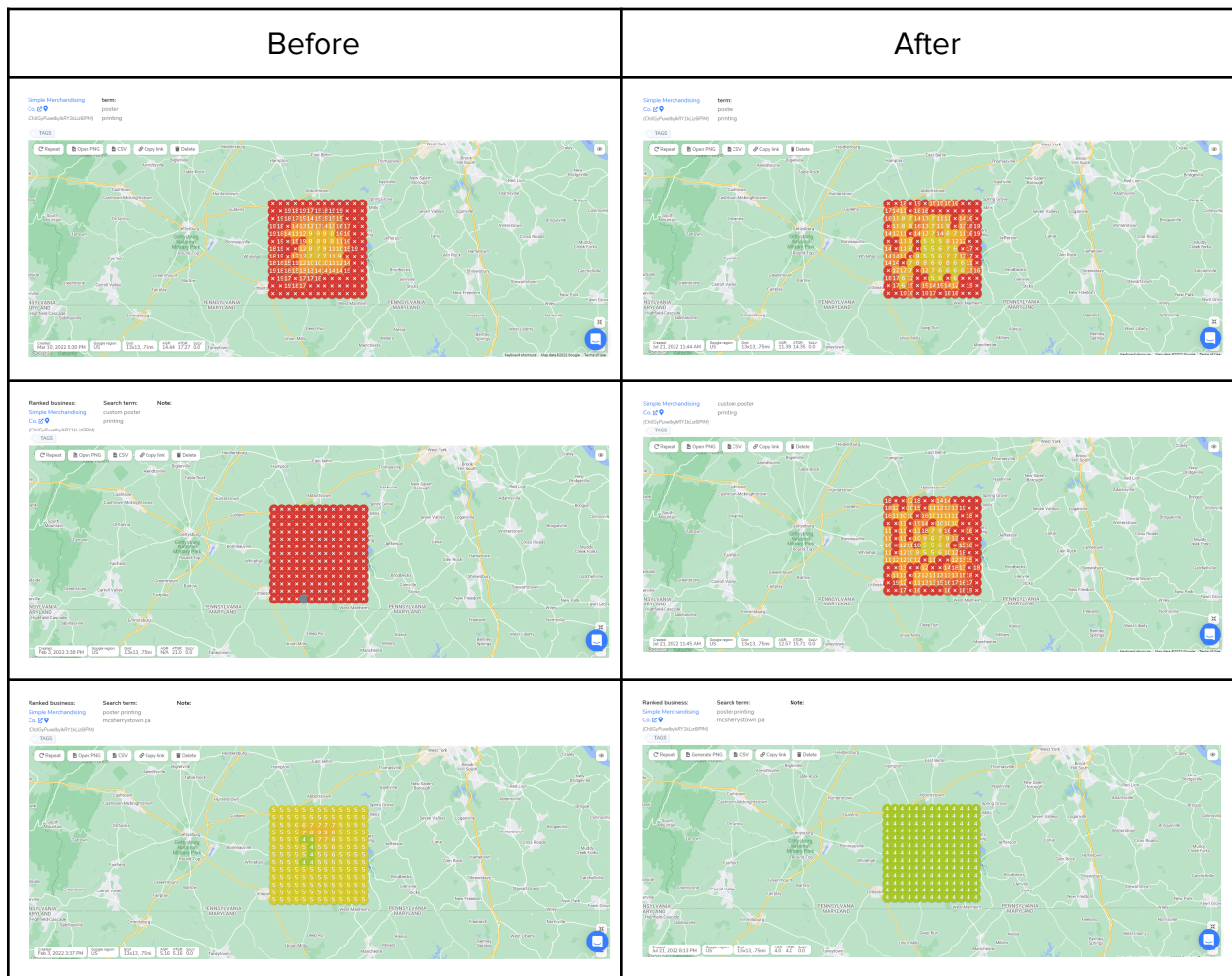
Search term:  
posters

Note:

(ChIJGyPuxelbyIkRY1kLizGIPIM)

TAGS





We saw some initial ranking improvement early on and were showing in the top three right before writing this update. We were continuing to see upward movement.

This could be a sign of the importance of age for these signals, or Google is possibly increasing the weight on these two signals (services and reviews).

We don't know for sure but what does seem clear is having services listed on your listing and then having people add reviews on your listing referencing the exact services you list increases listing relevance for those services...



# How Should You Optimize H1 Headings?



**Test Setup:** [July 1st, 2022](#)

During a previous update, we noticed some test sites where we were testing highly targeted terms seemed to get hit. These were poorly optimized pages with very little content - essentially only optimized for certain words needed to test their potential.

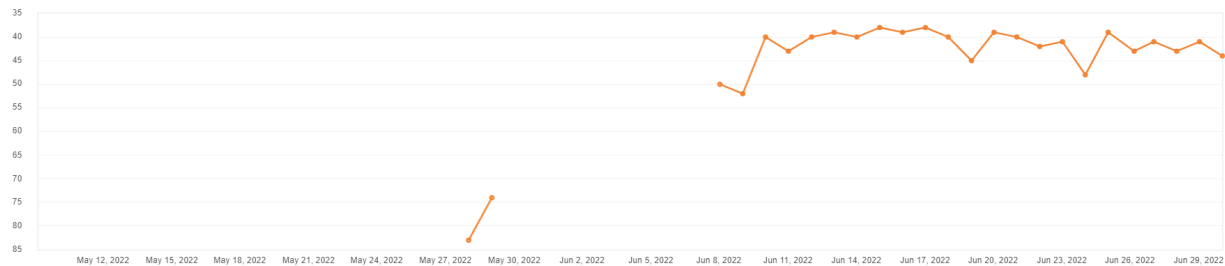
The strongest correlation we saw between these pages and our actual sites was "broad H1s". We used a very broad term for our H1 tag, like "Chicago Roofing", then optimized the rest of the page with broad headings like "Chicago Roofing contractor" and "Chicago Roofing replacement."

We suspected the under-optimized heading caused some drops in our rankings. After analyzing, we hypothesized Google couldn't figure out the substance of the content from just a simple "keyword heading".

Fast forward to launching a new website and we started noticing the same separation. Pages we launched with longer tail headings versus keyword headings saw different results. Long tail heading content generally showed on page 1 or 2, while single keyword heading pages performed much worse. Pages with single keyword headings showed on page 4 or 5 or didn't pop at all...

Rank	 Change
2	0
44	 3
-	-

These results led us to change one of our page's titles to a more descriptive title to see how it would impact the rankings. Our original primary target term in the H1 was a 4-word target term, but we changed it to a 12-word optimized phrase about 30 days prior.



The initial results led us to believe the under-optimized headings might be an important factor in the new core update. So we started working on a single variable split test to see if we could get to the bottom of it.

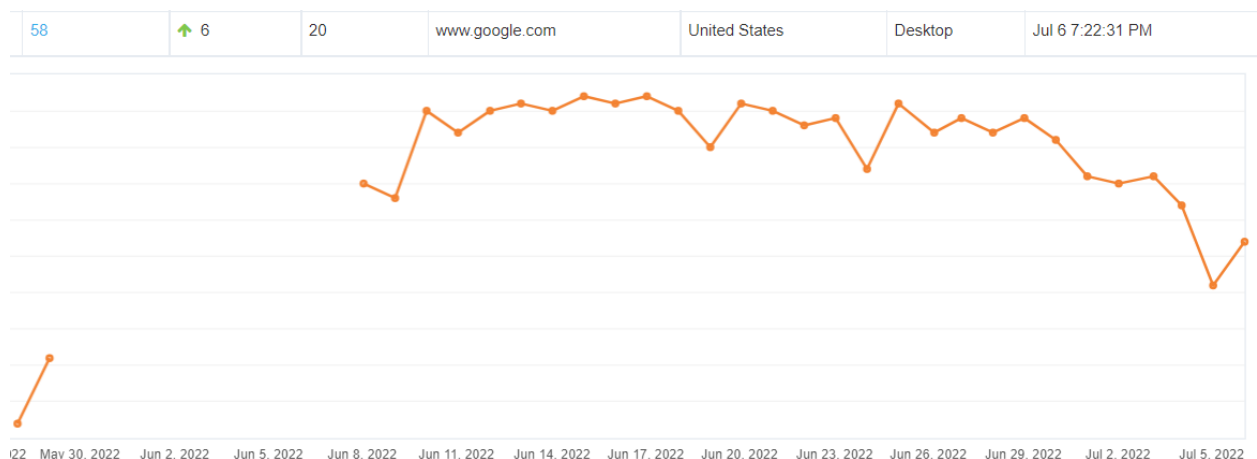
We picked the test term "kutdhknfdc" and added a local modifier - "Hanover PA." We then launched two pages and two separate sites with little to no history. On one page, we tested "kutdhknfdc Hanover PA" as the H1 and on the second as "kutdhknfdc and other things to do in Hanover PA."

We then suited the pages for the index and tracked the term "kutdhknfdc Hanover PA."

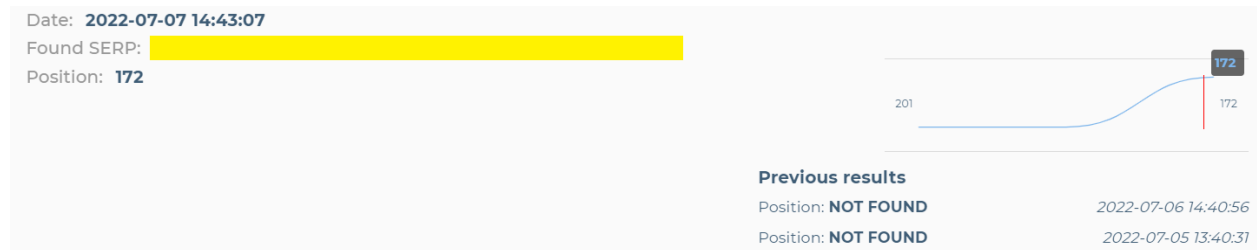
We assumed page two could rank higher due to having more content in the H1 or simply because it provides more context. While we waited for those results, we continued our single site tests, changing single term heading into optimized phrases.

### Update: [July 8th, 2022](#)

After news of a Google Update, last week's reported test page saw a huge decline in rankings (everything it had gained from the change).



At the time of this reporting, we were seeing new related keywords ranking different website pages as well.



So we wondered, “Did the page LOSE its relevance on the page where we changed the H1 from the exact keyword to a longtail keyword-optimized phrase?” We initially saw the rankings went up and then dropped back over the next few days.

On the page where we changed the H1 from a longtail keyword-optimized phrase to a shorter phrase, we initially saw the rankings go down, then went back up. There was not enough information yet to make any determinations, but it was interesting to see this occur around the same time...

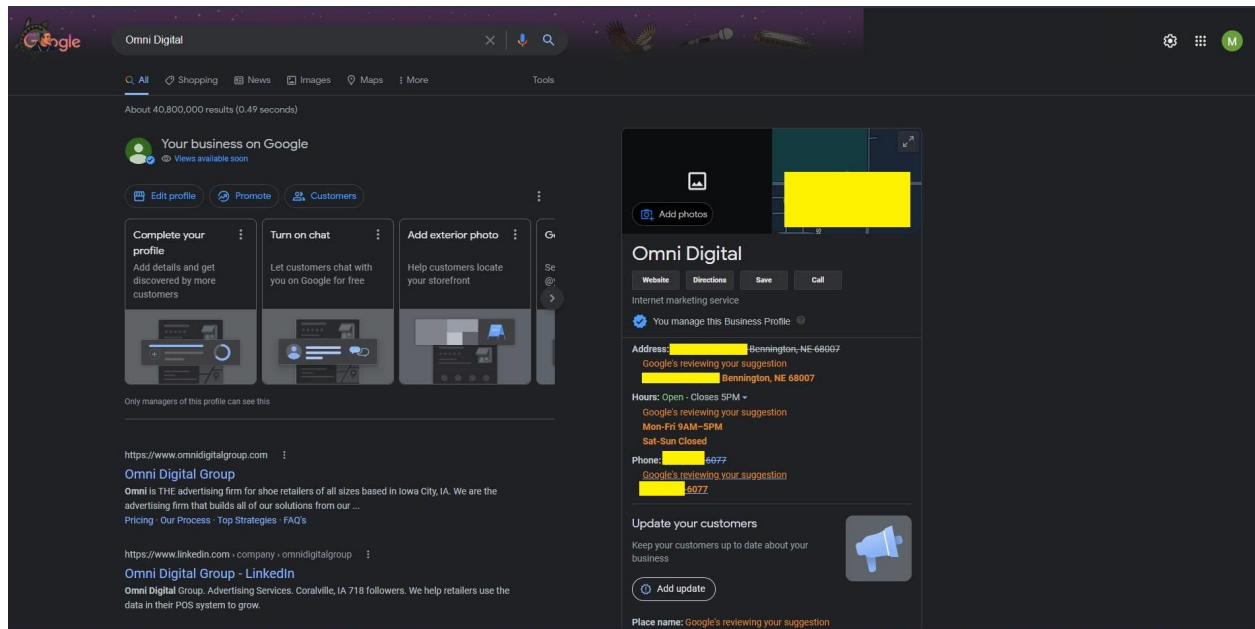
## How to Trigger Instant GBP Verification: Process is Changing

**Test Setup:** [July 8th, 2022](#)

During a recent testing update, we noticed a massive change in the verification process Google was putting us through. We were getting listings verified within 20-30 minutes...

Even more interesting than the fact they were almost instantly verifying was how we added them to Google...

Immediately after adding the listing, Google said they would be “Reviewing Our Edits” and then displayed our listing like this:



Within 30 minutes of the listing being submitted this way, Google verified it, and I added it to our GBP dashboard. Before you try to guess how we verified this listing, let's just quickly go over the facts:

- The listing was for an “Internet Marketing Service” business
- Used a personal cell phone number (a local number from a different state)
- Added a short description directly from the website
- Added the website (agency website with Lorum Ipsum text and no local information)
- No analytics or search console connected (attempted to connect with Site Kit but got an error)
- Added as a local business using a residential home address.
- Added from desktop inside the GBP management dashboard
- Was on my home internet with an IP out of California

We thought this may have just been a fluke. However, two more listings at the same address were verified in this way. We believe this will not necessarily be the norm for verifying a listing. However, we do believe Google is beginning to make a shift toward algorithmic GBP verification.

Google stated last year that this year would include many changes, such as the management of GBP from the front end of Google, the removal of the My Businesses mobile app, and changing the way changes are made and approved on Google Maps.

This means we could see a drastic change in the verification process, which also means more test opportunities. YAY!

**Update:** [July 15th, 2022](#)

We heard many people having issues with client GBP verifications. That's why we began testing different verification setups to determine how Google is now "trusting" new GBPs when they are submitted...

Full disclosure, we ran about nine tests across three different accounts, so we are working with limited data. With that said, we will highlight three of the tests we believe told us a lot about what Google was looking at when triggering a verification or even instant verification.

Each test includes a short video where we recorded the process we followed to submit the GBP. These are mostly meant for quick reference as they are sped up to show you what happened.

### **Listing 1: Instant Verify at Current Address (Home)**

The first listing was a simple test to see if our previously discovered "instant verification" would be triggered again if we did the same thing.

Here are some bullet points on what was done/used to set up the GBP:

- Was at the location we were listing the GBP at
- Using local Wifi with computer and phone
- Created listing from the desktop computer
- Used a cell phone as a phone number

Some other details we didn't feel played a significant role were the website used and the Gmail address. The website did not have a Search Console or Analytics setup when verifying the listing, and the Gmail account was newer, having been created in the past year. The website also did not have a local address or any local targeting.

In this scenario, we got an instant verification, and it took about 20 minutes for Google to confirm the edits...



Here is the quick video for reference:

<https://web20ranker.com/wp-content/uploads/gmb-verify.mp4>

### **Listing 2: Video Verify at Remote Address (1 Mile Away)**

For this next test, we did the same exact thing but with a location about a mile away from where we were located. We did not use any website in this example to see if it made any significant difference.

In this setup scenario, we were asked to do a video verification to verify the GBP listing. Since we were not “at” the location we were trying to verify the GBP, this made sense to us and somewhat confirmed our assumption that Google was using different data points to check various aspects. Google then required verification based on each finding, such as video verification to confirm you are at the actual location, in this case...

Here is the second recap video for reference:

<https://web20ranker.com/wp-content/uploads/gmb-verify-2-final.mp4>

### **Listing 3: Phone Verify at the Current Address (Library)**

This was one of the few final tests we ran, where we obtained the listing and confirmed most of our findings.

Again, here are what we feel contributed most based on all our tests:

- Was at the location I was verifying the GBP listing at
- Using local Wifi with our computer
- Location service turned on on our phone
- Created listing from the computer
- Used our cell phone as a phone number

This situation was similar to our first test; however, our cell phone was not on local Wi-Fi. In this case, Google asked us to text message to verify the phone number or to use e-mail. It seemed there was a slight variation in trust signals from our first test, which triggered the phone verification.

Here is the final clip for reference:

<https://web20ranker.com/wp-content/uploads/gmb-verify-final-3.mp4>

When all is said and done, the biggest factors Google seems to be verifying are the physical address and “business” (specifically contact info). In short, **if Google can verify**

**that the business has the correct contact information and is physically located at an address, you will have no problem verifying.**

The question is, *how was Google determining the physical address?*

As we stated, some of the biggest factors that seemed to influence our testing were where we were physically (if we were at the address) and the accounts and info being used to verify.

Being signed in to a local Wi-Fi at the location had the biggest impact on getting verified. Still, some other factors seemed to make a difference in triggering phone or video verification:

- Using a cell phone number (with a cell phone at the location)
- Gmail was used to verify the GBP, the Gmail was attached to the android cell phone number used on the listing.
- Being on local wifi from phone and computer being used to verify




With limited tests, it's hard to determine the EXACT factors. Still, so far, when we are at the address on the local wifi without a computer and phone and use the cell phone number as the business number, we have had a 100% verification rate through phone, email, or instant verification.

It's also important to note that we tested these categories in roofing and internet marketing services. The business category could have had an impact as well.

**Update: [July 22nd, 2022](#)**

In the previous test we verified some listings with our cell phone number on the local wifi. We continued to test verification changes, which lead us to some new tests and results to report. We ended up verifying new listings that didn't even need local wifi!

In fact, one is at a Walmart, and the other is at a bowling alley...

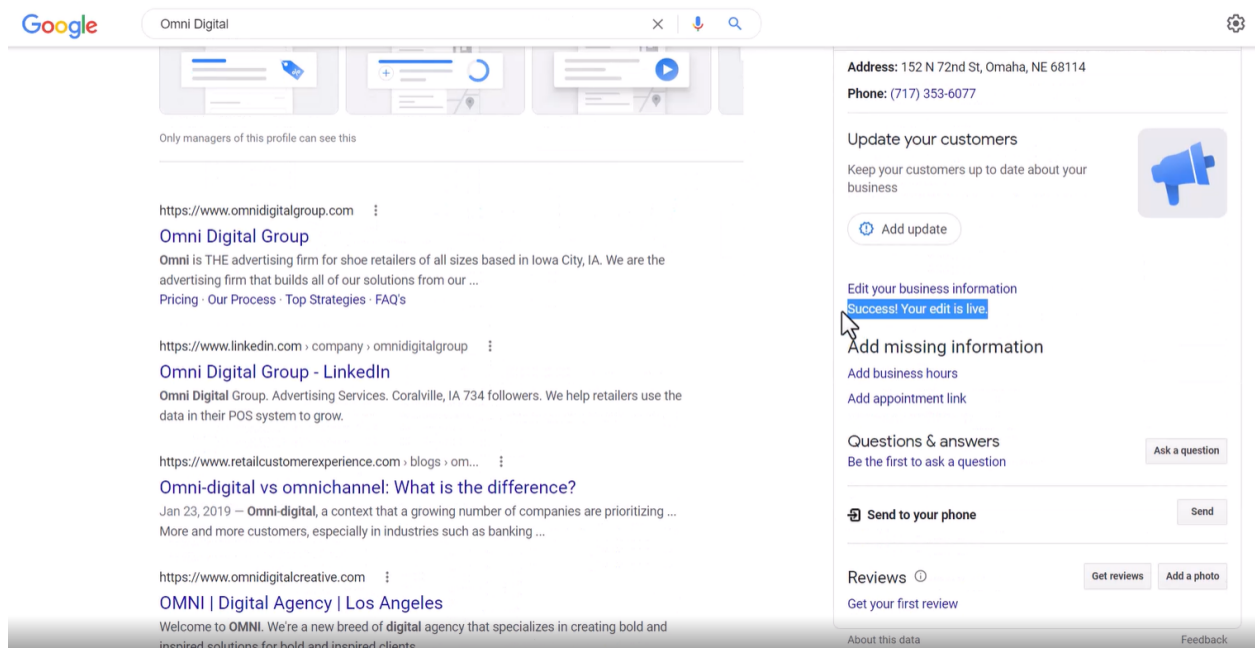
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business ↓	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Omni Digital 13105 Birch Dr, Omaha, NE 68164	 Verified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Omni Digital 5111 N 90th St, Omaha, NE 68134	 Verified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Omni Digital 152 N 72nd St, Omaha, NE 68114	 Verified

Here is a quick rundown of the details:

- We were at the location with a cell phone and computer
- Location services turned on both devices
- Using phone wifi as a hotspot for internet
- Added GBP from GBP dashboard
- Used cell phone number as business phone number
- Added non-local website (phone number was on the site but wasn't previously)

First Verification (Quick Video for Reference):

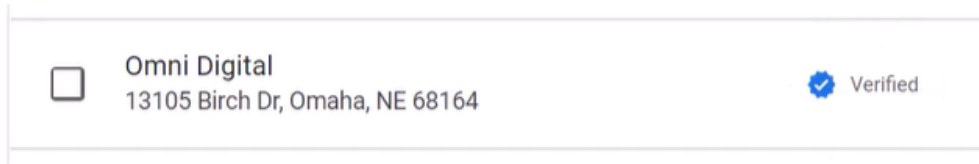
<https://web20ranker.com/wp-content/uploads/gbp-verify-4.mp4>



The screenshot shows a Google Business Profile for 'Omni Digital'. The profile is located at 152 N 72nd St, Omaha, NE 68114, with a phone number of (717) 353-6077. The profile is managed by 'Omni Digital Group'. The profile details section shows the address, phone number, and a link to the website. The profile is also listed on LinkedIn. The profile is currently in a 'Success' state, with a message 'Success! Your edit is live.' displayed. The profile is also in the process of being verified, with a 'Verify' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Maps app, with a 'Send to your phone' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Assistant app, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Home app, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Play Store, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google App Store, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Play Services, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Play Protect, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Play Store, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google App Store, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Play Services, with a 'Send' button visible. The profile is also in the process of being added to the Google Play Protect, with a 'Send' button visible.

Second Verification (Quick Video for Reference):

<https://web20ranker.com/wp-content/uploads/gbp-verify-5.mp4>



After all our testing we noticed that non-SABs that list an address on maps seem to have the best chance at triggering phone or instant verification (or better chance of getting verified at all). We speculated that this may be since Google's main concern when listing a “location” on Google is confirming “you” (your contact details) are actually at the address and accessible from the location.

SABs are also more prone to spam since lead gens use a service area and fake address to gain exposure with Google Maps. This is another reason SAB listings could be under more scrutiny.

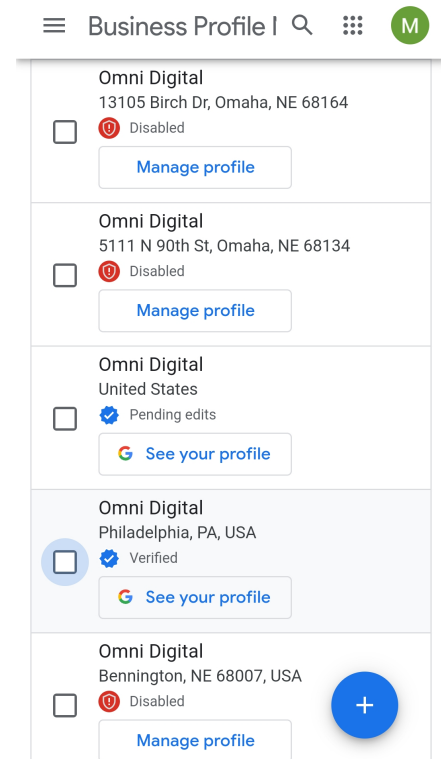
This is why we believe that using the cell phone number while at the location and on the computer triggers a phone verification. Google knows the phone was at that location, so they just need to confirm you actually have access to it. That seems to be enough to convince Google to verify the listing currently.

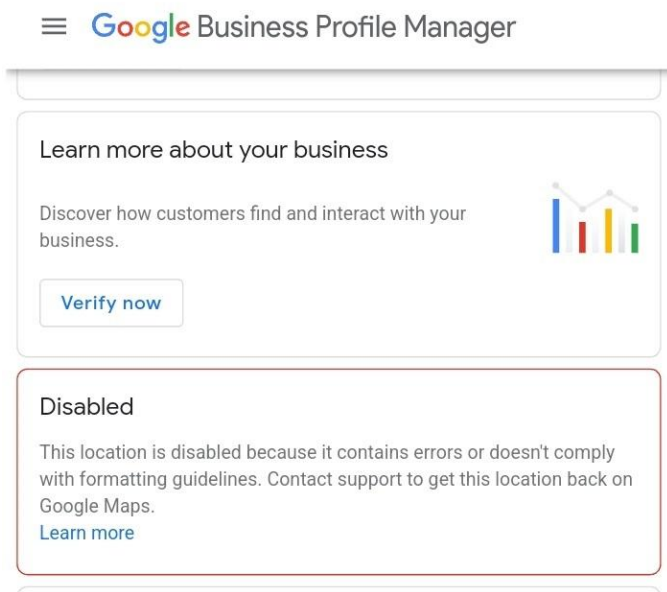
**Update:** [July 29th, 2022](#)

We’re back with another GBP test update where we will look at last week’s test listings and possible GBP suspension factors. First, let’s start with a glance at last week’s listings.

As you can see, “all” of the listings have been suspended. All is in quotes because these are “all” the test listings I disclosed in our tests, but not all the test listings we did...

Our other listings are still up; some of them were listed at the same address but were not “Omni Digital,” and I removed the address after verification. We speculated





that having the address listed when it's a known Library or Walmart was probably the primary factor in getting the listing disabled.

It should also be said that most of the listings weren't actually "suspended" but removed from maps and require a new address or verification.

This test result prompted us to enter another address, triggering a postcard verification...

The biggest factor here was obviously that we had made these listings public, but on top of that, they were all the same brand, "Omni Digital."

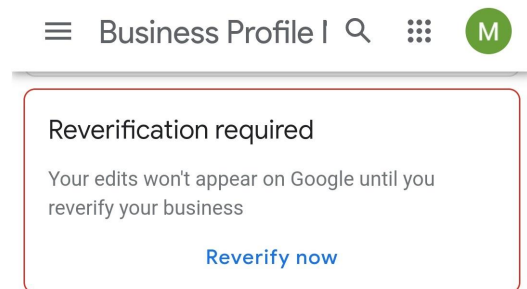
Also, adding these at a library or a supermarket was also a likely reason these were hit so quickly.

**Update:** [August 12th, 2022](#)

Over the last few test updates, we had been setting up some new test GBP listings which less us to uncover some new changes in the verification process. Certain signals seemed to trigger phone, e-mail, and even instant verifications, but we wanted to conduct just a few final tests to see if we could better pinpoint the major factors.

Based on our previous tests, we knew the following seemed to help trigger instant verification:

- Using a cell phone number that was at the location
- Using a Gmail account that was logged into the Android cell phone being used
- Being physically at the location and signed onto local wifi
- Set business and a local address on maps that does not service clients at their location





After setting up 10+ listings, these seemed to be the biggest factors, but after testing a bit more, we found that being signed into the local wifi helped. However, local wifi was most likely not the main factor in triggering instant verification, as we successfully put up six additional test listings while not on the local network.

In our last round for this update, we put up three more listings testing a few more variations.

1. No website
2. Non cell phone number
3. Service area business

All 3 triggered instant or phone verification, and **the NUMBER ONE factor that remained constant was that we used a Gmail account that was connected to an Android phone that was currently at the location...**

For these listing setups we used a Twilio number, didn't add a website and even set one to a service area - all three were verified.

## How Long Does GBP Indexation Take?

**Test Setup:** [August 19th, 2022](#)

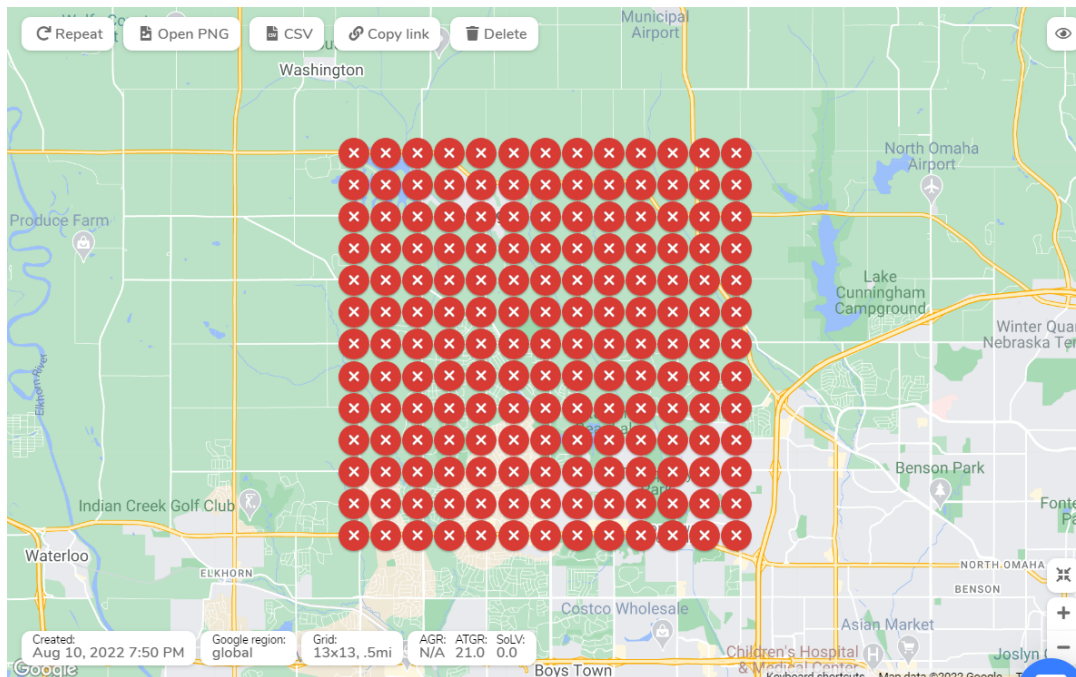
The first part of these tests was basic, “How long does it take for a GBP to ‘index’?” While testing instant verifications for new listings, we had noticed some interesting “sandbox” situations that seemed to impact how the GBP performed after first being launched. That’s what led to these tests...

We began by creating a new listing (the one in the update above) and did very little on listing optimization. No services, no description, just the business name, business hours, and category...

The business name was branded and did not contain any local or keyword terms or local or keyword term variations...

We didn't begin with any on-listing optimization. We only built a basic website with some relevant pages and inner linking. The website itself was not heavily optimized, mostly just mentioning various services keywords we are tracking...

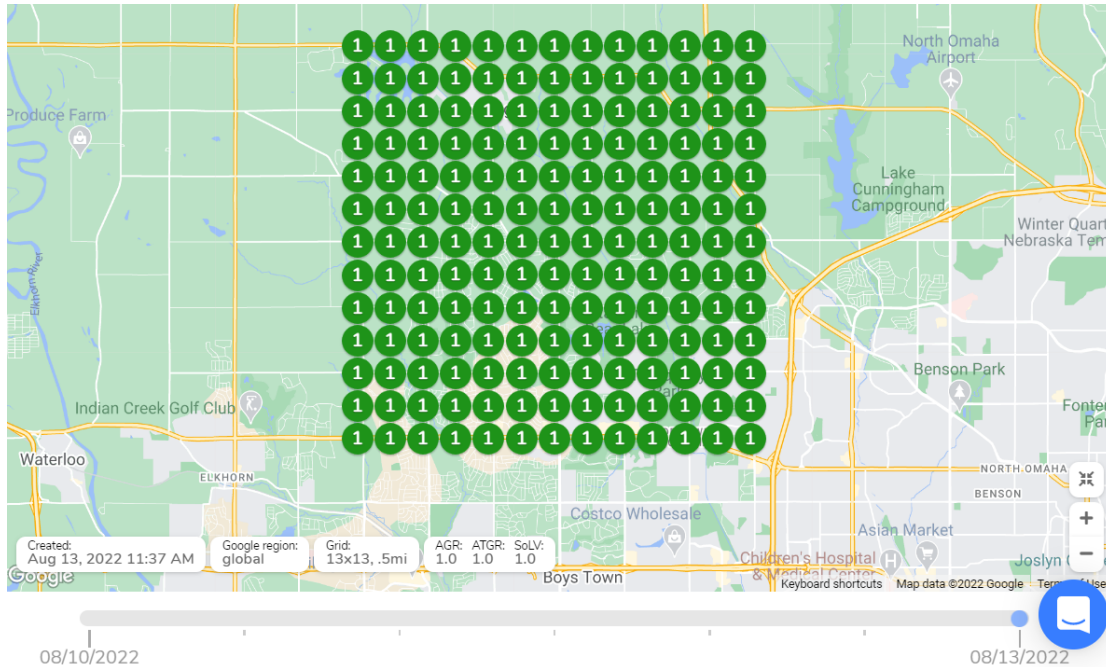
Right out the gate, we were not showing for our brand or ANY SEO terms...



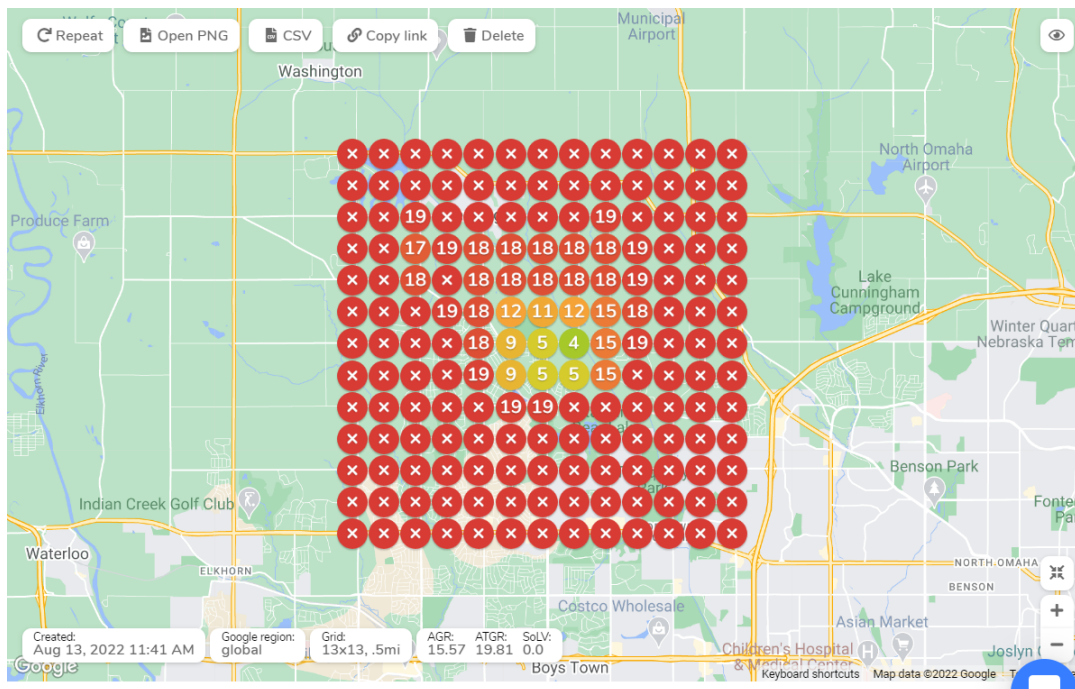
We put up the website on an old domain that was not indexed, so upon putting up the GBP, the website we added to the listing was not indexed in Google's search. We wanted to ensure everything was launched at the same time (within 24 hours)

For the first 48 hours, we didn't have any visibility in Search. When searching for our exact brand name, we did not even see our GBP or website in organic or maps.

In about two and a half days, we saw the listing official begin to show in search results for the Brand name in our tracking range.



We did not show for ANY keywords on our website or any others, but the exact category we listed on the listing began to show in maps. The visibility was very limited but obvious that upon the initial listing going live in SERPs, Google seems to specifically look at the brand name and business category as the primary “indexing” factors.



We already assumed this to be true but did not know the exact time frames for sure. From all possible keywords we are tracking, it's important to note that the very first terms Google showed us in SERPs for are the exact brand name and category keywords with slight variation in orders and combinations. No other terms were even being tested by Google in the first week.

In our other tests, it did not take longer than 3 days for our listing to show in SERPs after going up.

There is a good chance that Google does not initially use the website for listing relevance even though we have seen evidence that it could be a possibility. Since we pushed the listing and the website live around the same time, we were also tracking the organic indexation and rankings of our website. Upon the listing showing, the website itself was not indexed in organic search.

Average Position	↑ Improved	♥ Top 3	✓ Top 10	🔍 Top 30	🏠 Top 100
201	0/18	0/18	0/18	0/18	0/18
vs 201 (change 0.00)		vs 0 (change 0.00)	vs 0 (change 0.00)	vs 0 (change 0.00)	vs 0 (change 0.00)

Keywords										
<input type="text" value="Search..."/>										
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword	Change	Latest	Best	First	L-Vol	G-Vol	Updated	URL Found	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Link-Building omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:40	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Maps Optimization	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:37	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword Research omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:37	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEO Consulting omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:40	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical SEO omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:47	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Onsite Optimization oma...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:37	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Off-Site SEO omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:40	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Entity Optimization oma...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:38	NOT FOUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEO Strategy omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	?	?	2022-08-13 10:47:39	NOT FOUND	

If onsite impacts the listing, we assumed once our website was indexed, we would see impacts on the listing. This made us question whether the organic index is considered when ranking the GBP, or if maps has its own separate way of indexing website content in regards to GBP listings.

**Update: [September 3rd, 2022](#)**

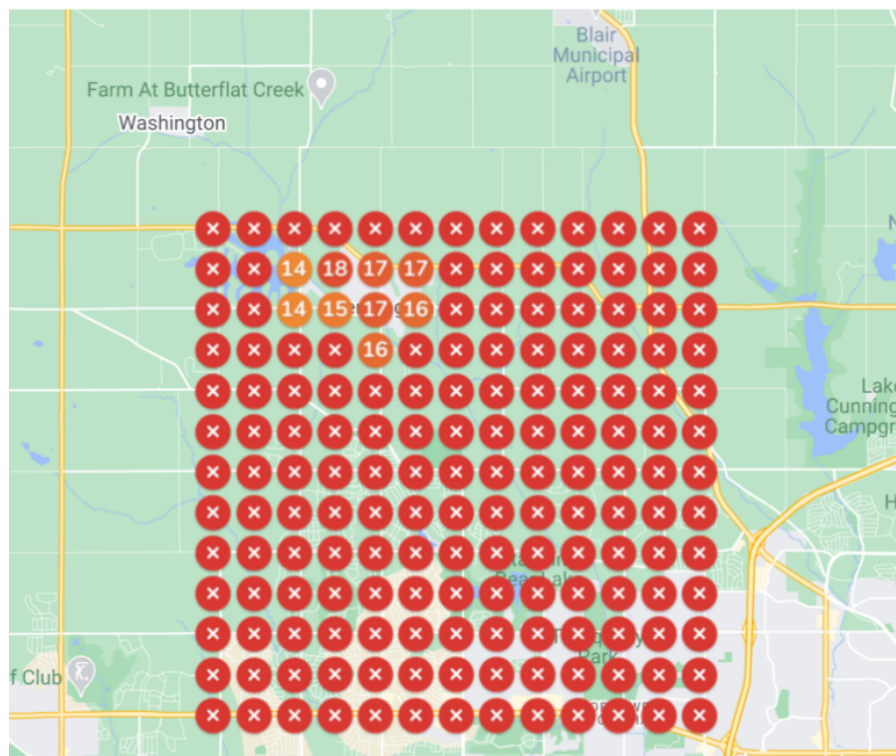
After we put up a new GBP listing and optimized various parts of the listing for different products or services we offered, we started tracking the keywords' progress to see which optimization areas responded the quickest when going live. More specifically, on a new listing...

A week before this test update, we had just begun to show for our brand and primary category. Only exact match terms to the category and business name had been showing essentially. We created the listing on August 10th, brand and category terms started showing after two days, and after 18 days (written 8/28/2022) there had been no change to any of our keywords showing outside of the brand and category...

**Update: [September 9, 2022](#)**

We were just now seeing some terms outside our brand name and category begin to rank.

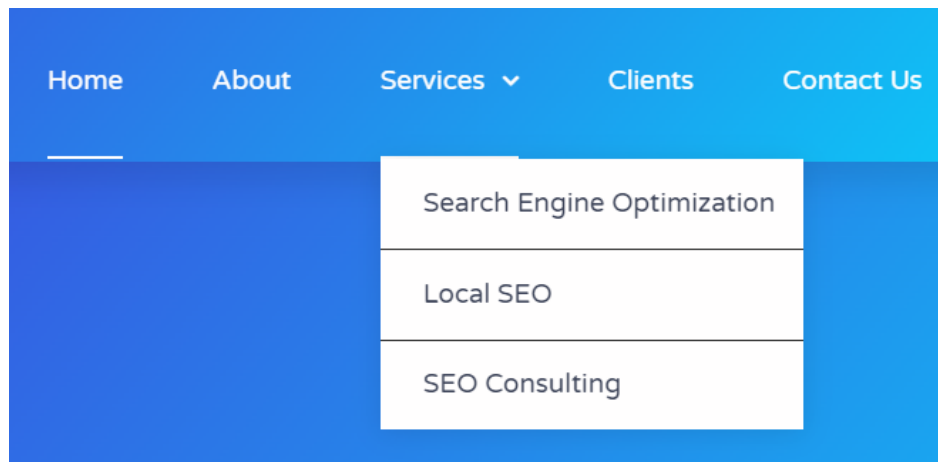
Address: —  
Search term: seo consulting





“SEO Consulting” had popped into the SERPs as of 9/8. The listing went live on 8/10, so it had been 19 days. It’s important to note "SEO" was present in a few places on the listing (not in the brand or category). However, "consulting" was only in one place...

Specifically, "SEO Consulting" was an inner page on our website and was present in the top menu on our website's homepage.



It's interesting to see an emphasis specifically on the top menu. We didn't know if this was because it specifically linked to an internal page, because it was a menu item, or if Google simply crawled the page and it was one of the lower comp terms that it picked up and started testing the site for in the SERPs.

**Update:** [September 23, 2022](#)

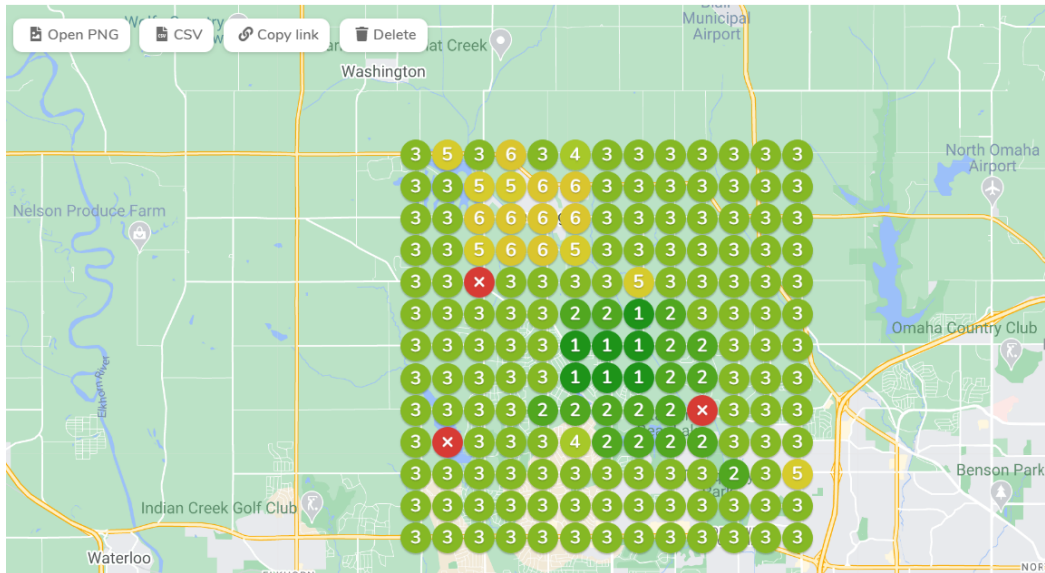
We had been tracking the indexation of a new GBP listing, specifically to see what aspects of the listing seem to influence rankings first...

Once the listing was indexed, it took about a week for Google to split-test various terms within the brand name and GBP category. Aside from these terms, no other terms seemed to rank our listing during this time. It wasn't until a few weeks into the test (*approximately*) that we began to see some additional keyword rankings...

The first terms we saw ranking a little were for “SEO Consulting” (consulting only being mentioned in one place, on our website within the menu). However, when looking further into our geo-modified keywords, we started to see a lot of keywords that were only referenced on the homepage now showing in SERPs.

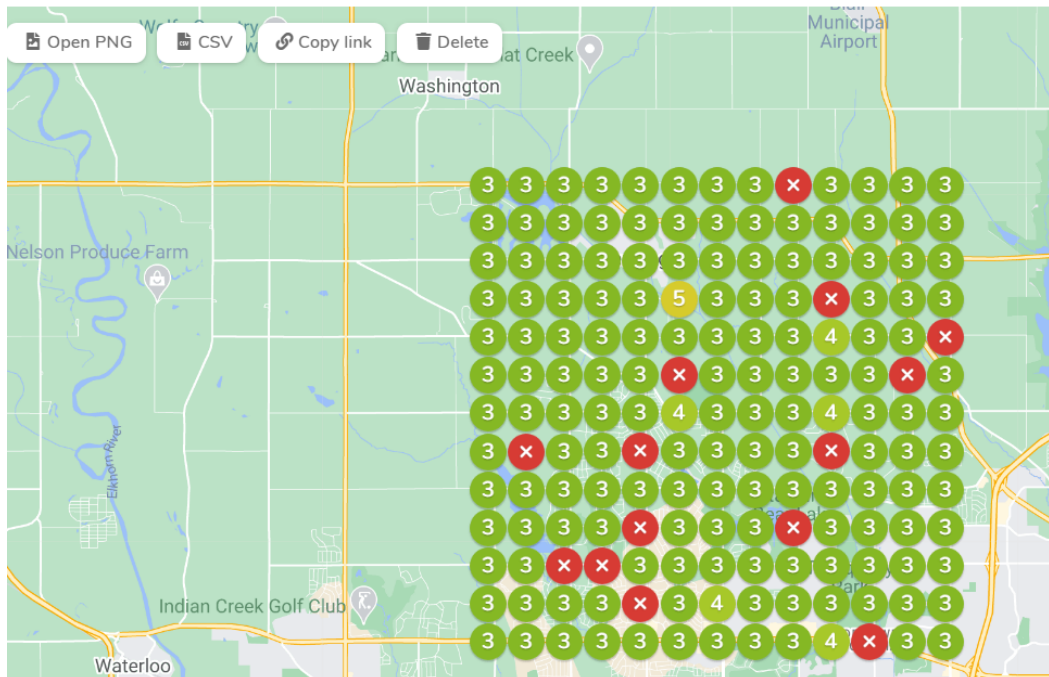
Search term:  
SEO Campaigns  
Bennington

Note:



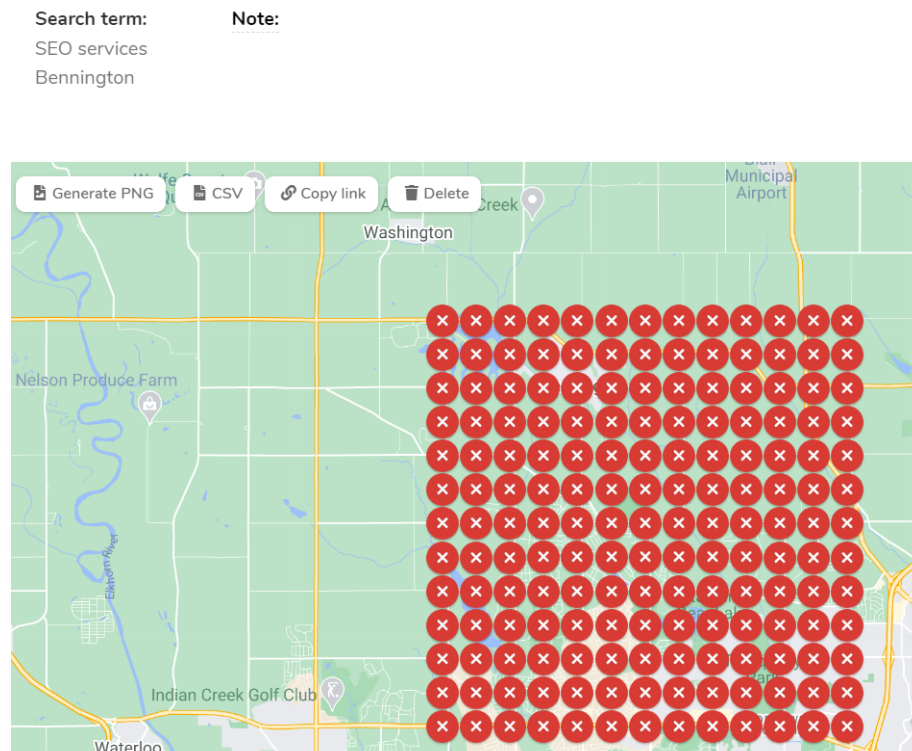
Search term:  
SEO Strategy  
Bennington

Note:



At a glance, most of our headings on the homepage had also impacted the rankings.

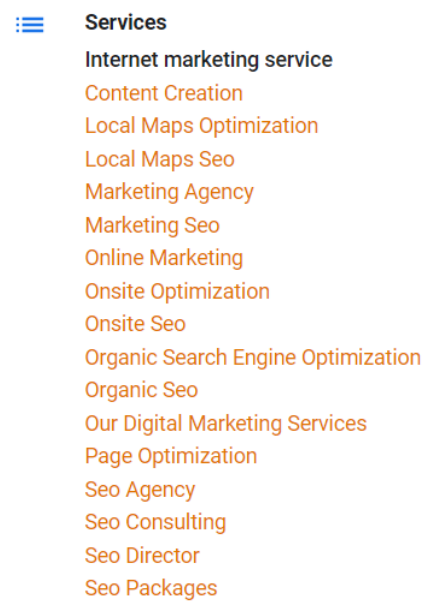
For example, “seo campaigns” was mentioned in a H2 and was showing some rankings. However, the term “SEO services” wasn’t showing at all yet, even for long tail geo searches. “SEO services” was mentioned on the website and even on the GBP listing products, but still no movement for that term.



Once we looked at the listing, we then noticed Google had done something...

They added a huge list of services to our GBP listing!

*So, where did Google pull these services from?* The one that caught our eye first was “our digital marketing services” because it included the term “our.” So we searched for this term on our webpage and found it...



# We Create Unique SEO Campaigns That Help Your Business Grow

Creative 1 Media is a leading digital marketing agency specializing in SEO services. We help businesses get their websites displayed higher on Google through our range of effective SEO services. Our services include off-page optimization, keyword research, onsite SEO, organic SEO, local maps SEO, backlinks strategy, and more.

We have a proven track record in helping businesses achieve their online marketing goals, and we can do the same for you. Contact us today to find out more about [our digital marketing services](#).

[Learn More →](#)

We could clearly see Google pulled this service list from our website content. Maybe it wasn't enough to move the needle for some of them. Still, we were fairly confident that the 3rd thing Google looked at very heavily when launching a new listing was the additional brand properties - specifically the GBP website listed on the listing.

We could even see it pulling in headings from our staff sections...

SEO Agency  
Seo Consulting  
Seo Director  
Seo Packages



Timothy Powell  
[SEO Director](#)



Lisa R. Boone  
[Search Engine Strategist](#)

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So, aside from the business name and category, **one of the most important signals seemed to be the website attached to the GBP.**

This correlation could also be from third-party brand mentions that Google could have assigned to the GBP CID. However, the website was the only external property in this test. We would have to do the same test with no website listed, but a brand property indexed, to see if we get the same effect.

**Update: [September 30, 2022](#)**

At the time of this update, we hadn't seen any major movement with our current terms that Google clearly pulled from our website (noted in the last week's test).

However, one of the terms we did have listed as a service on our listing that was not showing any rankings was "website design."

**Internet marketing service**  
Primary category

Website Design

From \$1999

Creative 1 Media offers professional web design services for all types of businesses. Contact a representative for a custom website development quote today.

>

Search term:

web design

bennington ne

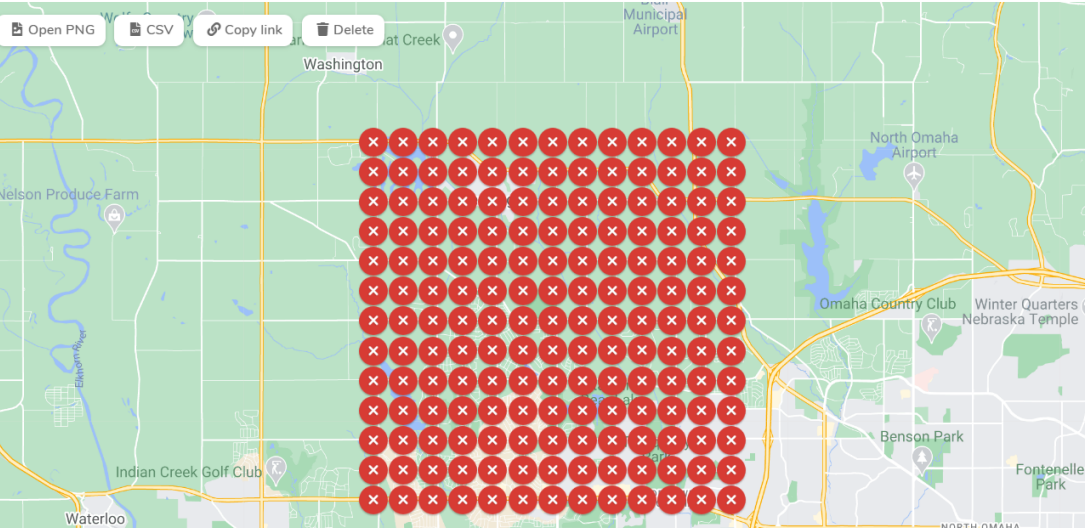
Note:

Open PNG

CSV

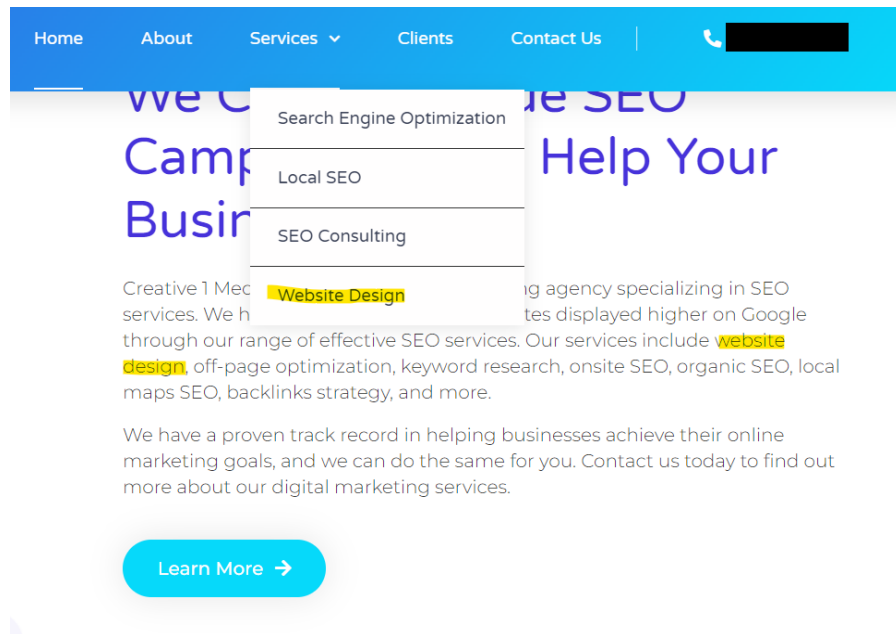
Copy link

Delete





Once we identified where Google had originally pulled the relevance from on our website, we decided to see if adding these terms to the website in the same places caused any ranking increases.



We wanted to keep it simple and test the two primary locations that Google pulled from for our first original keywords. So we didn't create an internal page for "website design" in the menu, we just added the text with no link to see if it was the text itself listed in the heading across the site that had any impact in itself.

We will have more updates on this test in the Q4 report and weekly SEO Mad Scientist updates.




## What Happens to Rankings When Market a Listing as Temporarily Closed then Reopen It?

**Test Setup:** [August 26th, 2022](#)

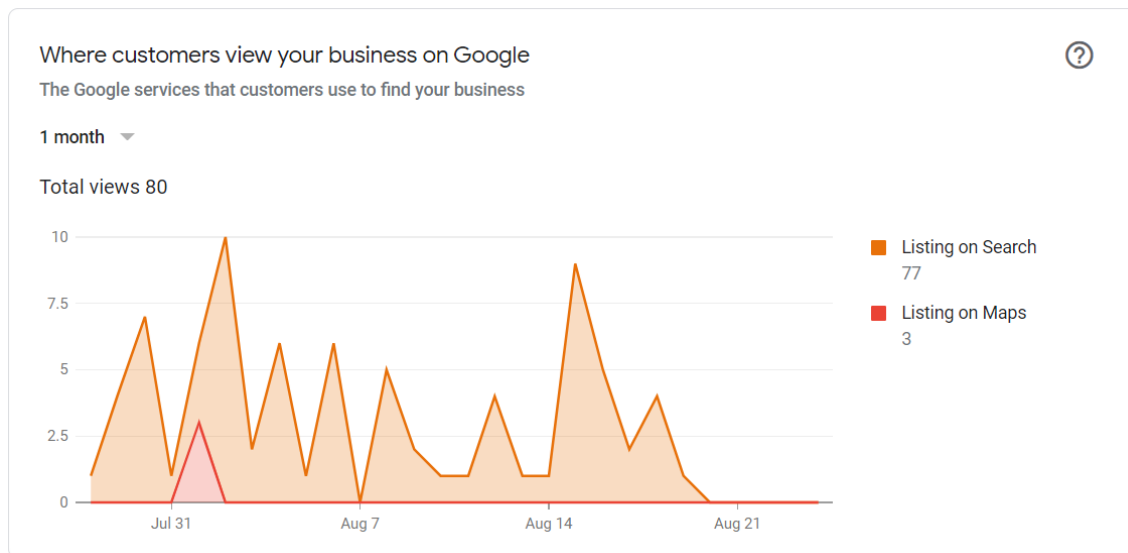
We marked a GBP listing as temporarily closed to see what happens when you make it open again. This was a fun test because it's something we rarely get to do with clients, as we can't go closing their GBP listings to see how they react...

At the same time, we have received many questions from clients about marking a business as closed or temporarily closed and how it can impact them.

Here we have our active listing that we marked temporarily closed on 8/17/2022

Businesses		All (1)	Add business
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business	Status	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Simple Merchandising Co. McSherrystown, PA 17344, USA Temporarily closed	Verified	   <a href="#">See your profile</a>
		Rows per page: 50	1-1 of 1

Similar to our current GBP indexation test, it took about 3 days for our GBP to respond to the change, and Google stopped showing the business in search...

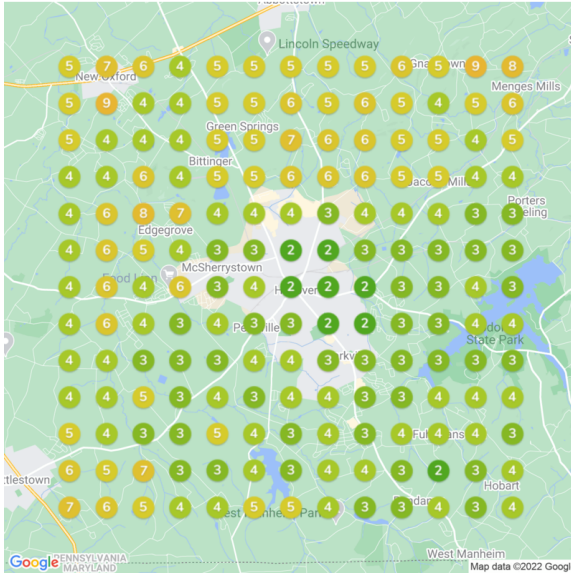


You can see the ranking drop when you look at the GeoGrid rankings. However, even though some terms fell off completely, there were some main terms that Google still seems to be showing...

**Simple Merchandising Co.**

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: custom posters

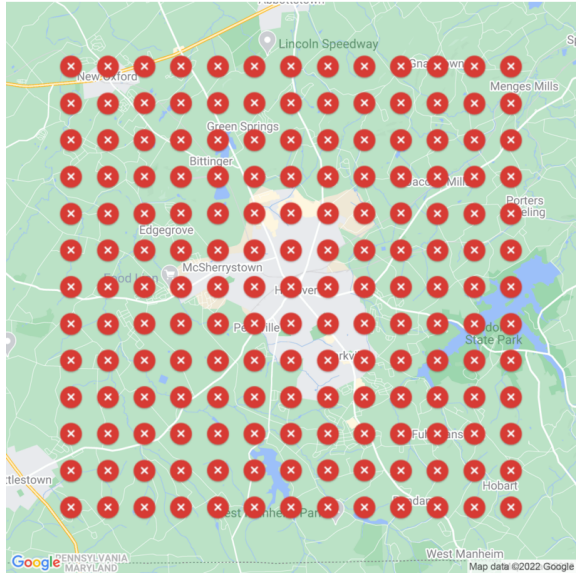
18 Aug 2022



**Simple Merchandising Co.**

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: custom posters

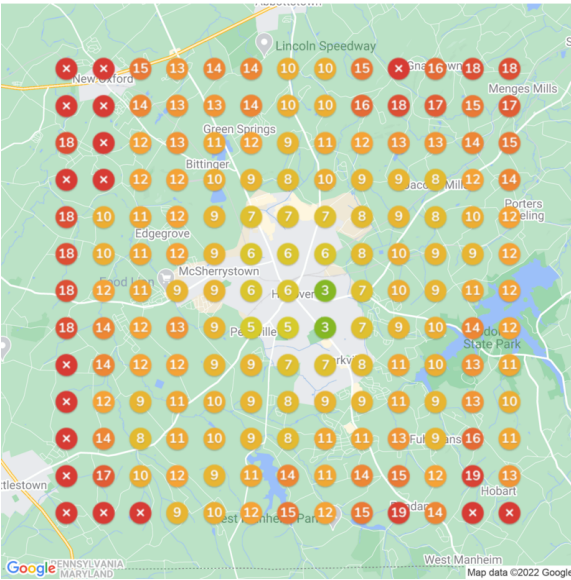
24 Aug 2022



**Simple Merchandising Co.**

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: print shop

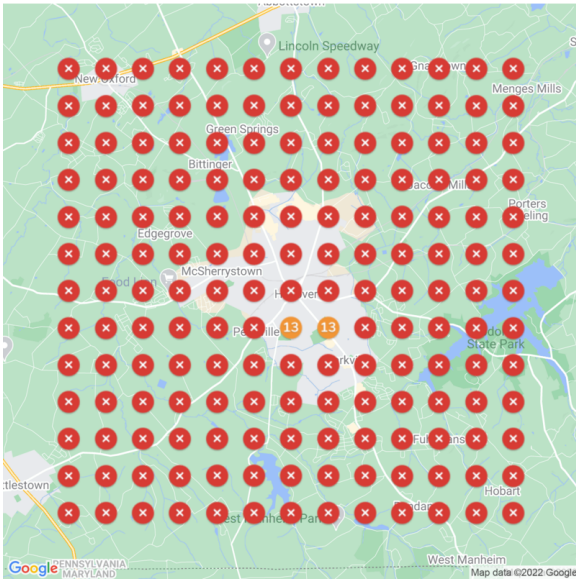
18 Aug 2022



**Simple Merchandising Co.**

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: print shop

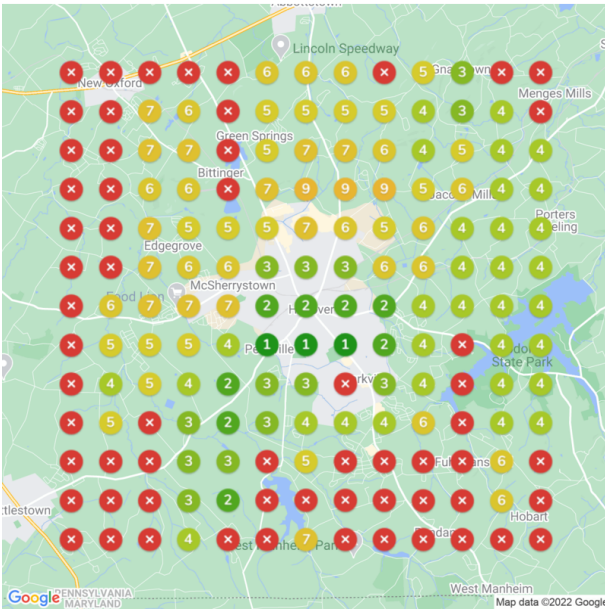
24 Aug 2022



**Simple Merchandising Co.**

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: printing shop

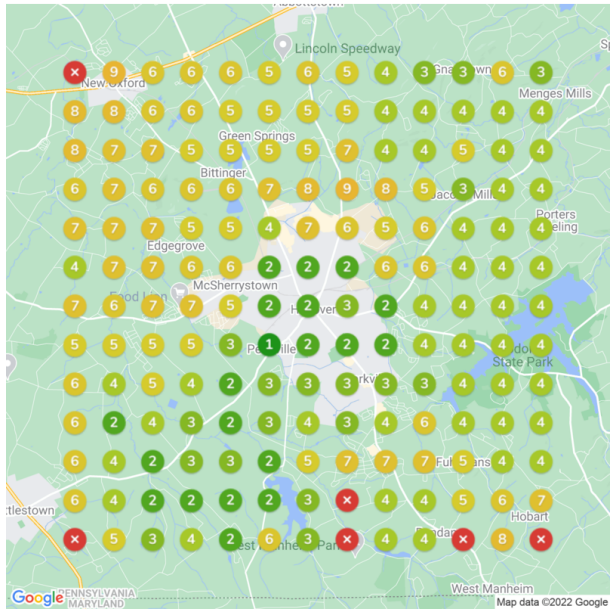
11 Aug 2022



**Simple Merchandising Co.**

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: printing shop

24 Aug 2022



The terms we were ranking for due to services, products, and posts seem to have all lost ranking, while some term variations and longtail still showed at the time of this update. We hypothesized these lower-traffic terms may take longer for the rankings to update. As we could see, all traffic has stopped.

The weirdest ranking was probably for our primary “brand” term, “merchandising.” This keyword was part of the brand name “Simple Merchandising Co.” Because people could still be searching for our brand, and Google must show them the company to tell them that it is closed, we believed this was why these terms are responding so weirdly. The following geo grids were all taken within 24 hours.



Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: merchandising

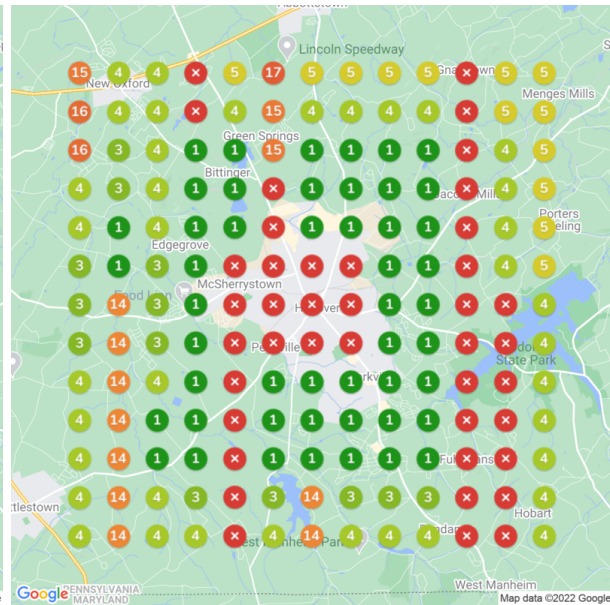
24 Aug 2022



Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: merchandising

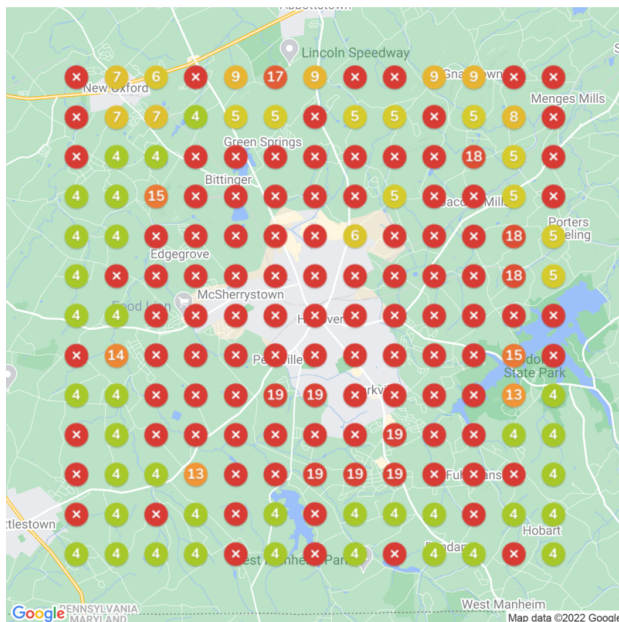
25 Aug 2022



Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: merchandising

25 Aug 2022



Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: merchandising

25 Aug 2022

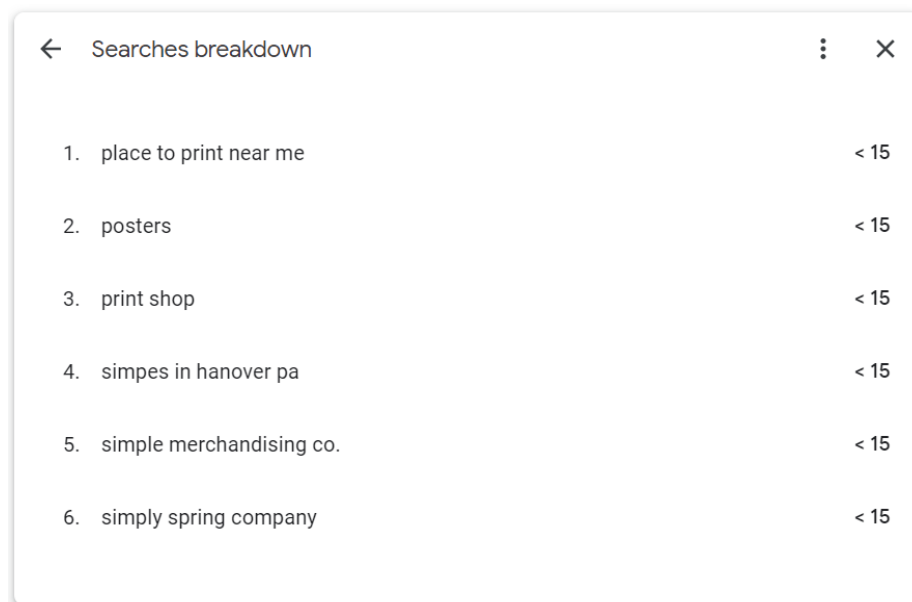


We continued to monitor the ranking over the next few days to see if we observed any more rankings drop off. Then we can answer the real question, “Will our rankings return completely when we reopen the business?”

**Update:** [September 3rd, 2022](#)

At the time of this update, we had observed a complete loss of traffic and most rankings for some keywords. However, we still saw many variations of keywords ranking, and some even go up in ranking (which may just be a coincidence)...

We noticed when we looked at GBP Insight, the exact keywords that Google told us we were getting traffic for, were no longer ranked in our geographical area.



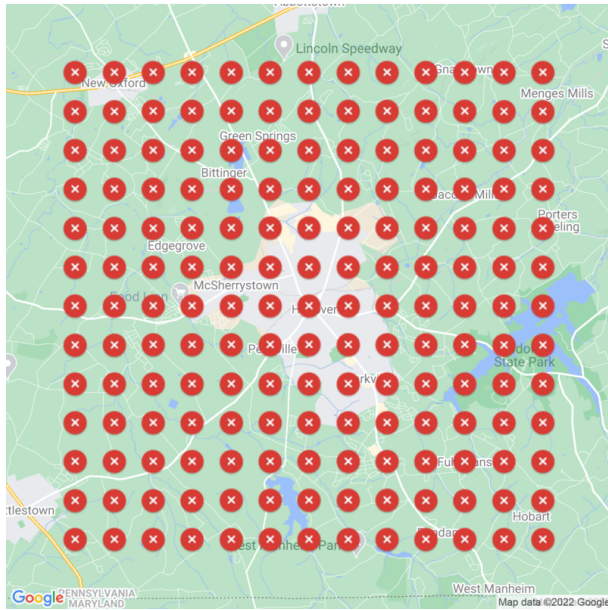
← Searches breakdown		⋮	×
1.	place to print near me	< 15	
2.	posters	< 15	
3.	print shop	< 15	
4.	simpes in hanover pa	< 15	
5.	simple merchandising co.	< 15	
6.	simply spring company	< 15	

Print shop, the GBP category, was the most obvious example. Google was showing the term “print shop” as generating traffic, as opposed to “printing shop,” which had no local searches...

Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: print shop

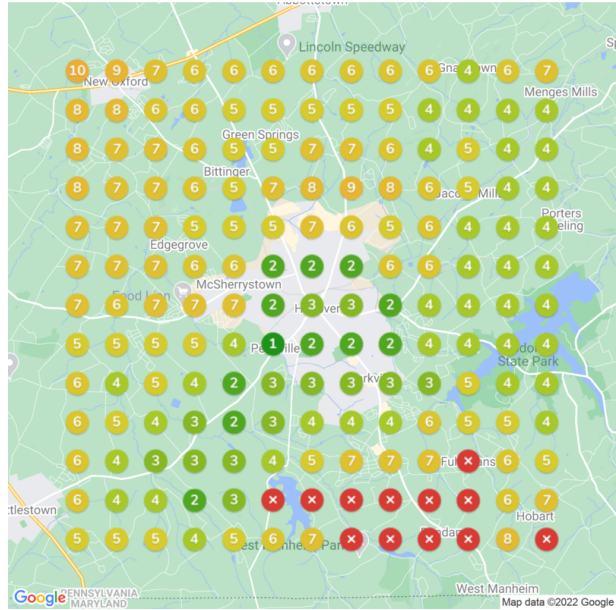
28 Aug 2022



Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: printing shop

28 Aug 2022

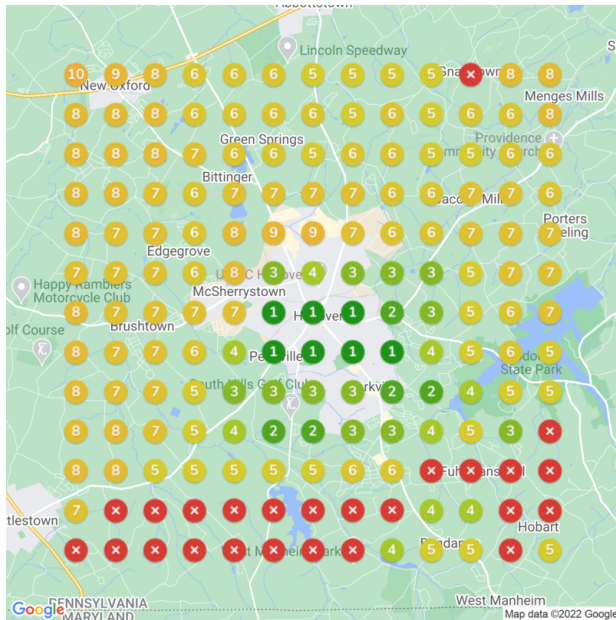


Or specifically the poster keywords:

Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: posters

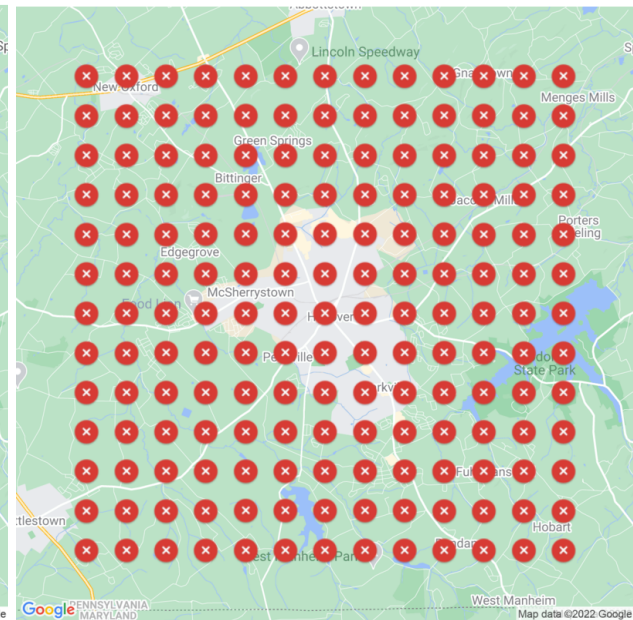
11 Aug 2022



Simple Merchandising Co.

Address: 104 Carlisle St, Hanover, PA 17331, USA  
Search term: posters

28 Aug 2022





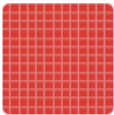
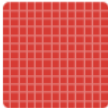
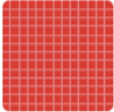
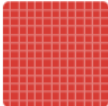
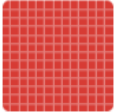
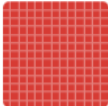
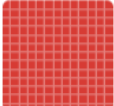
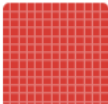
It was almost as if Google was filtering the listing based on traffic. When we marked the business as temporarily closed, it seemed Google didn't "delist" the maps listing. Instead, they just took known traffic data and suppressed those specific searches.

This was complete speculation, but it seemed like suppressing known searches with traffic would require less work than referencing all "possible" keyword searches and suppressing them all (essentially delisting it but not deindexing it).

If our theory was correct, then we would expect Google "unsuppresses" these specific SERPs once the business is marked open again. We waited to mark the business open again until we saw if any of these other terms would lose their rankings, but they seem to hold strong. So as of September 1st, we marked the listing open again.

**Update:** [September 9, 2022](#)

Last update we went over the current results after temporarily closing the listing. We noticed that rankings were being affected in areas where we were receiving traffic but not other terms. Shortly after that, we reopened the listing, and about a week later, here were our results...

<b>Search terms:</b>				<b>Search terms:</b>			
<b>merchandise shop</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0			<b>poster printing</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0		
<b>merchandise shops</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0			<b>posters</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0		
<b>merchandising</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0			<b>printing</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0		
<b>place to print</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0			<b>printing company</b> Sep 8, 2:37 PM	AGR: N/A ATGR: 21.0 SoLV: 0.0		

Whatever suppression Google was doing because of temporarily closing the business was most likely not done, or something reset when reopening the listing and just wiped out all SERPs while it re-indexed.

We didn't know how long it would take for rankings return. But it is safe to say we would not advise marking a GBP as temporarily closed, even if you are.

Unless you are ok with losing all your rankings...



That's it for our Q3 testing, but we will be back to share more of our findings with you next quarter! If you want to follow along with the tests in this report, be sure to [sign-up for SEO Mad Scientist updates](#) in our Weekend Emails.

Have new test ideas or insight into current testing? Be sure to drop them in the [Local SEO Community](#)! We are always looking for new aspects to test and love discussing different perspectives on SEO. You can also just join the group to ask SEO questions and make connections.

Until next time, happy testing!